

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 05246 200948Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 INRE-00 HA-05 SS-15 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 5246

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, SREF, LE, IS

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: RETURN OF REFUGEES

REF: (A) BEIRUT 2142; (B) TEL AVIV 5081; (C) BEIRUT 2225;
(D) BIRUT 2132

1. IN RESPONSE TO OUR LETTER TO IDF CONTAINING SPECIFIC
QUESTIONS RELATING TO DIFFICULTIES BEING ENCOUNTERED BY
REFUGEE CONVOYS AND REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE STATE OF
PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE REGION (REF A), THE IDF HAS
PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ANSWER CLASSIFIED SECRET.

2. "THE IDF IS BOUND TO ITS BASIC DECISION TO DO ITS
UTMOST AND ENALBE THE IMMEDIATE RETURN OF THE SOUTH
LEBANESE REFUGEES TO THEIR HOMES.

"HOWEVER, SICE THE TERRORISTS' AIM IS CLEAR TO
INFILTRATE SOUTHERN LEBANON, THE REFUGEES MUST BE
CHECKED BY THE IDF, BEARING IN MIND THAT THE TERRORISTS
HAVE ALREADY INFILTRATED THE PASSAGES TO SOUTH LEBANON,
SECURITY CHECKS ARE INEVITABLE.

"THE IDF IS AWARE OF THE INCONVENIENCE CAUSED TO
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THE RETURNEES AND WILL DO ITS BEST TO MINIMIZE IT."

2. ABOVE WAS PASSED TO US YESTERDAY EVENING AT
AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION FOR GENERAL EITAN. ARMA CORNERED
GEN. A. ORLY, IDF COORDINATOR OF ADMINISTERED
TERRITORIES (WHO HAS NOW BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING GOI REFUGEE

POLICY IN SOUTH LEBANON), AND CHALLENGED THIS RESPONSE AS NOT ADDRESSING THE QUESTIONS POSED, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING SERVICES. ORLY REITERATED LINE THAT THE IDF WANTED REFUGEES TO RETURN, BUT THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED DETAILED SEARCHES AND CHECKS. HE INSISTED THE IDF HAS ALREADY DISCOVERED A NUMBER OF UNARMED PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS TRYING TO INFILTRATE BACK IN GUISE OF REFUGEES AND THIS HAS INCREASED IDF'S SENSITIVITY TO PROBLEM.

3. REGARDING SUBJECT OF SERVICES, ORLY SAID HE HAD ISSUED ORDERS ON APRIL 19 THAT ENGINEERS FROM BEIRUT BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE SOUTH AND SURVEY THE SITUATION. ARMA THEN READ PARA 3 OF REF C TO ORLY, POINTING OUT ARRESTS COULD FURTHER COMPLICATE AN ALREADY SHAKY PROGRAM. ORLY ADMITTED THAT "SOME TWENTY-SIX OR SO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED BUT FOURTEEN HAVE ALREADY BEEN RELEASED AND WE ARE INVESTIGATING THE OTHERS." HE RELATED THE ARRESTS TO THE UNARMED PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS CITED ABOVE.

3. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT REF D CONTAINS STATEMENT BY GOVERNOR OF SOUTH LEBANON TO EFFECT THAT HE IS SATISFIED WITH REFUGEE MOVEMENT ALTHOUGH EARLY CLOSING OF IDF CHECKPOINTS HAS HAMPERED PROCESS. OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT IDF SEARCHES WILL CONTINUE TO BE VERY EXACTING
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AND THUS WILL CONTINUE TO BE VIEWED BY GOL AS HARASSMENT. THE ARRESTS WILL CONTINUE SO LONG AS THE IDF REMAINS IN THE AREA AND SO LONG AS PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS ATTEMPT TO INFILTRATE THROUGH IDF LINES. MEANWHILE, CONTINUED EXPRESSIONS OF OUR CONCERN OVER PROBLEM UNDOUBTEDLY WILL HASTEN RELEASE OF THOSE DETERMINED TO BE BONA FIDE REFUGEES. UNFORTUNATELY THE FORTUNES OF WAR ARE SUCH THAT MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SUFFER HARDSHIP IN THE PROCESS. FROM HERE THE PROBLEM OF SURVEY OF SERVICES NOW APPEARS ON WAY TO RESOLUTION AND WE NOTE (REF D) THAT GOL HAS TEAMS READY TO GO. ARE WE CORRECT IN THIS ASSUMPTION?
LEWIS

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NNN

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